Prison Chaplaincy

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Prison Chaplaincy: worth our time?

‘Don’t worry, we’ll get you to do a proper job first!’

(Quoted in P Phillips, Roles and Identities of Anglican Chaplains: A Prison Ethnography, 2013)
Where’s the research?

‘There is a distinct paucity of sustained qualitative, ethnographic research, carried out in England and Wales that explores the role and contribution of prison chaplains and chaplaincy services...’

A Todd and L Tipton, ‘The Role and Contribution of a Multi-Faith Prison Chaplaincy to the Contemporary Prison Service’ (Final Report, 2011)
Where’s the research?

‘The presence of chaplains in contemporary society is a phenomenon that exists without much systematic inquiry, explanation, or understanding’.

C Swift, M Cobb and A Todd (eds.)
‘A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies’
(Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2015)
The field is widening...
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Local to Reception Prison
Remand Statistics

- **8,250** men and women on remand in England and Wales (2017 average figures, Ministry of Justice)
- **11.4%** of the annual total
- **c.85,000** men and women in prison in 2017 in England and Wales (2017 average figures, Ministry of Justice)
HM Inspectorate of Prisons

‘...remand prisoners enter custody with multiple and complex needs that are equally, if not more, pervasive than among sentenced prisoners. We found that many had a poorer regime, less support and less preparation for release than sentenced prisoners.’

HMIP, ‘Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review’ (HMIP, August 2012)
HMIP Remand Report, 2012

- 60% of new receptions did not know which prison they were travelling to from court when remanded.
- 25% felt suicidal or prone to self-harming upon induction
- 25% felt victimised by other prisoners or by staff.
- Just under 50% reported finding access to legal representation difficult
50% reported they were not engaged in any meaningful activity such as work or education on a regular basis.

31% said they spent less than two hours out of cell a day,

66% said they had received no support with resettlement towards the end of their sentence or before release.
Pastoral issues on remand

- Extant emotional, mental, physical health issues
- Distance from family
- Lack of immediate communication
- Role change – loss of job, family, livelihoods
- Uncertainty about the future
- Self-harm / suicidal thoughts
- Ongoing or new bereavements (disenfranchised grief)
How many chaplains?

In 2011...

- **357** full-time employed chaplains,
- **700-800** sessional / part-time chaplains
- **c.7000** volunteers

These are all likely to be much higher in reality

(Todd and Tipton, 2011)
Pastoral Care: A Prison Service Perspective

- Statutory Duties (Reception, Healthcare, Segregation Unit, Self-Harm/Suicide list)
- Faith Groups and Services
- One-to-one support and care
- ‘+ Pastoralia’ (ie. everything else!)
Pastoral Care on Remand

- Practical Theological / Qualitative Research Project
- Three Local / Reception Prisons (Durham, Leeds, Manchester [TBC])
- Two to three year study (DThM)
- Grounded Theory methodology
- Mixed-methods approach
Pastoral Care on Remand

- Semi-Structured interviews with chaplains, prisoners, prison staff
- Case studies: following prisoners through their time on remand
- Observations / Environmental Audit
Pastoral Care on Remand

Results:

- Deeper understanding of remand chaplaincy theology
- More informed praxis
- Better care of remand prisoners
- Widen boundaries of prison chaplaincy research
Final thoughts...

“The need to wrestle with our identity as a chaplain in its many facets is vital if we are to sustain engagement in this demanding world. To search for answers where there seems to be no answers, and to address themes and issues which are deep and full of significance whilst giving some hope and perspective, is vital: the ongoing work of vigorous thought and sustained reflection is necessary for our survival as individual chaplains.”

D Fraser, ‘A Pastoral Heart and a Critical Mind’ (Practical Theology, 3:2 [2010])